THE

DEATH OF SOCRATES,

A POEM;

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

A. DE LAMARTINE.

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED TO

THE LORD HARRY GRAY,

EARL OF STAMFORD.

BY HARRIETT COPE.

London:

PRINTED AND SOLD FOR THE TRANSLATOR.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY W. GLINDON, 51, RUPERT STREET, HAYMARKET.

BL

TO THE LORD HARRY GRAY,

EARL OF STAMFORD.

My Lord,

Under the unfortunate existing circumstances attendant upon my translation of the Death of Socrates, I am too well aware that an apology is necessary for presuming to lay it at the feet of your Lordship; however, the generous attention the effusions of the Dunsley Muse has upon all occasions experienced from your Lordship, inspires me with a hope, that the same

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generous and benevolent feeling by which you have been actuated in patronising my productions, will be extended to the translation, and that your Lordship will accede to my request, of allowing your illustrious name to grace my page, in which hope, I have the honor to remain,

MY LORD,

Your LORDSHIP'S most faithful

and devoted humble servant,

HARRIETT COPE.

Asylum Terrace,
King's Road, June, 1829.

TO THE LORD HARRY GRAY,

EARL OF STAMFORD.

THRICE! there is surely magic in the sound,—
Like healing balm that cures the rankling wound,
All incantations, fairy charms of yore!
Healed by the spell repeated three times o'er.

The hapless muse, who twice hath spread her wing!
Seeking to tune her wild harp's trembling string,
Repelled from fam'd Olympus' tow'ring height!
Once more aspires to take a heaven-ward flight.—

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Ah! if in Enville's hallowed fragrant groves,
Or Dunsley's shades, which still fond mem'ry loves!
Rapt Contemplation might her soul inspire,
Whilst strains sonorous flow from silv'ry lyre!

Charm'd by the rural deities so blest,—
Stamford the gen'rous! might, with sacred zest,—
Inhale the fragrant incense of the flowers!—
Cull'd from fair Grecia's clime to deck his bowers.—

Yet He who loves to heal the broken heart!
And hope, and joy, and gladness, to impart;
He whose magnificence and glory bright!
Saw fit her former notes to sink in night.—

Tho' not inspired by Enville's perfum'd shades,
Dunsley's romantic craggy rocks or glades;
He, He! who shieldeth 'neath his feathery wing!
With potent charm her trembling lyre can string.—

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To lay before illustrious Stamford's feet!
The wreath Apollo's son hath wove so sweet,—
Whose strains melodious, in the Gallic land,—
The charms of poesy must needs expand.—

Brilliant and verdant shines the laurel crown,—
Won from chaste Clio, in Olympus' zone.
Who with her own blends his immortal name!
Whilst her celestial trumpet sounds his fame.—

Clad in the rainbow hues of hope's sweet vest!
Mellow as setting sun on ocean's breast—
The Sage's death the muse would consecrate,
To god-like Stamford! to avert its fate.—

The Sage, who golden faith immortal felt!
His soul divine, with joyous rapture melt;
Seems like a star forerunning that blest dove!
Who shines a sun in realms of light above.—

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Judges, nor earthly powers, could make him lie,—
Nor the soul's immortality deny.—
Trusting felicity would be his fate.—
The Saviour's death he seems to ante-date.

He whom celestial harps with praise adore,
Where golden vials streams of odour pour ;
The Lamb! for whom they sing seraphic strain,
" Worthy art thou! that for our sins wast slain :"

Haply the muse now strikes a noble shield,
Radiant as vesper star in azure field,—
To grace the poet's song of truth divine,
And thus add lustre to its beauteous shine!

Like phenix from its ashes thus shall rise
The bard's sweet wreath that won the Gallic prize!—
Wove with pathetic eloquence! so soft
That souls of feeling taste and soar aloft.—

Dunsley's sad muse, with ever grateful tear!
The sympathising Stamford! must revere;—
Recording angels shall attest her vow,
And weave a wreath celestial for his brow!

Such as in heaven will more illustrious glow—
The balm thence springs that softens human woe!—
The hapless muse resigned to meet her doom—
With Stamford's name silent awaits the tomb.—

ARIEL.

King's Road, Chelsea,
June 2, 1829.

ADVERTISEMENT

Translated.

If poetry is not a vague assemblage of sounds, it is, undoubtedly, the most sublime form that human thought can be clothed in; it borrows from music that indefinable quality of harmony, which has been called celestial; speaking to the senses by the cadence of sounds, and to the soul by the elevation and energy of the senses; it seizes at once the whole man; charms, ravishes, intoxicates him; exalts the divine

principle in him; makes him feel for a moment *that something more than human* which has caused it to be named the language of the gods.

It is at least the language of philosophers, if philosophy is what it ought to be, the highest degree of elevation given to the human thought—reason rendered divine: metaphysics and poetry are sisters, or rather one only; one being the beautiful in imagination, the other in expression. Why separate them? Why render one dry and debase the other? Has man too many celestial gifts that he may despoil himself of them at pleasure? does he fear giving too much energy to his soul by uniting these two powers? alas! he will ever fall soon enough into vulgar ideas

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and customs! Sublime Philosophy, Poetry her equal, are rapid revelations that too rarely happen to interrupt the sad monotony of ages; that which is beautiful in every species is not the natural state; it is a light from that other world, where the soul may sometimes be elevated, but where she doth not sojourn.

These reflections seem fit to excuse the author of this *fragment* for attempting to blend together poetry and the metaphysics of those fine doctrines of the sage of sages. Although the piece bears the name of Socrates, it is, nevertheless, found to contain a more advanced philosophy, and a foretaste of Christianity near bursting to light: if any man deserved that we should attribute to him sublime inspira-

tions before-hand, that man was undoubtedly Socrates.

He had combatted all his life that empire of the senses, which Christ came to overturn; his philosophy was all religious; it was humble, for he felt it inspired; it was mild, tolerant, resigned; it had divined the unity of God, the immortality of the soul, still more, if we may believe the commentators of Plato, and some words escaped from those two sublime mouths. Man had gone as far as man could go, a revelation was necessary to make him clear an immense step, Socrates felt the necessity of it, he pointed it out, he prepared it, by his discourse, his life and death, he was worthy of foreseeing it in his last moments—in one word,

he was inspired, he tells us so, he repeats it, and why should we refuse to believe, upon his word, the man who gave his life for the love of truth? are there many witnesses worthy the word of Socrates dying; undoubtedly he was inspired; he was a precursor of that definitive revelation which God prepared from time to time by partial revelations. Truth and wisdom are not of ourselves, they descend from heaven into hearts chosen and raised by God according to the necessity of the times, he sows them here and there, sheds them drop by drop, to give only the knowledge and desire of them, until the moment when he will satisfy us with fulness.

Independent of the sublimity of the doctrines which he announced, the death

of Socrates was a picture worthy the regard of man and heaven; he died without hatred for his persecutors, the victim of his virtues, offering himself as a sacrifice for truth; he might have defended himself, he would not, that would have been lying to the God who spake within him; and nothing announces that any sentiment of pride altered the purity, the beauty of this sublime devotion; his words, related by Plato, are as simple at the end of his last day, as in the middle of his life; the solemnity of the awful moment of death gives to his expressions neither pedantry nor weakness; obeying with love the will of the gods whom he loved to acknowledge in every thing, his last day differs in nothing from his former days, only that it would have no morrow!

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He continued with his friends, the subject of conversation began the evening before, drank the hemlock as a common beverage, and lay down to die as he would have done to sleep, so sure was he that the gods were there, before, after, everywhere, and that he should awake in their bosom!

The poet has not interrupted his song by the well known details of the judgment, and the long dissertations of Socrates and his friends, he has only sung the last moments, and last words of the philosopher, or at least the words attributed to him.

Socrates condemned to die for his

religious opinions, had expected death many days, but he was not to drink the hemlock until the moment when the vessel sent every year to Delos, in honour of Theseus, should return to the port of Athens, this was the vessel named *Theory*, and which was perceived in the distance at the moment when the poem begins.

The servant of the eleven was a slave of the tribunal destined for the service of the prisoners who waited the execution of their sentences. This fragment is printed as it was written by the author in an unusual form, in couplets of unequal measure, after each couplet we have placed a flower which indicates the suspension of the sense, and the author often passes

without any other transition from one thought to another.

We shall make use for the notes all drawn from Plato, of the admirable translation by Mr. Cousin. This young philosopher, worthy of explaining such a master, to make our age blush at its shameful and degrading sophistry, after having recalled him himself to the most noble theories of spirituality, has had the happy thought of revealing his ancient wisdom in all its grace and beauty; finding the philosophy of the day blemished with relics of materialism, he shews Socrates, and seems to say, this is what you are! and this is what you have been! Let us hope that in finishing his fine work

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he will disengage it also from the clouds with which Kant and some of his disciples have enveloped it—and make it appear to us all respendent with the pure light of Christianity.

THE

DEATH OF SOCRATES.

ON the heights of Hymetus the bright sun rose!
O'er the dome of the temple of Theseus glows!
Struck its red fires on the walls of Parthenon,
As a mournful adieu glided into the prison.—
On the sea was seen sailing a gilded prow,
To the sound of hymns holy, t'wards Pyreus' brow :
This was the vessel by whose fatal return
The condemned their last day were sure to learn ;—
But the law forbade that their doom should be done
Whilst the sun's sweet rays on Ionia shone,—

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Lest those bright rays for the living ordained,
By sightless eye-balls be dimmed or profaned;--
Or, that the unfortunate closing his sight,
Weep at once loss of life, and loss of light!
As the exile from fields of his fathers driven
Departs ere Aurora unveileth the heaven!

Waiting till the son of Sophronicus wake,
Their watch 'neath the porch his mourning friends take;
His fond spouse holding her son on her knees;
A tender child, whose hand with meazles plays!
Accusing the slowness of gaolers insensible!
Striking with her forehead the gates inflexible;
The crowd, inattentive to the cries of her woe,
Demand, as they pass, why thus her tears flow?

Pursuing again their course suspended,—
Where on the long pavement thick groups were
blended.—
Collecting a vague noise 'mid the people sown,
Of gods blasphemed! of altars o'erthrown!
Of new worship corrupting the youth of Greece!—
Of some strange god most destructive to peace!
Some odious monster, of vain senseless mind,—
Some new Orestes whom the just gods blind,
Whom the earth to heaven as sacrifice owed!
O'ertaken by justice at length on his road.
Socrates! was it thou in irons thrown,
To die for justice and for truth alone!!!

At length on their hinges the prison gates roll,
With sad step mov'd his friends to pour out their
soul!

But Socrates, casting his eye on the waves,
With his finger points out the signal of graves.
"Behold! on the sea yon prow crown'd with flow'rs,
From Delos it comes, with sweet cypress bowers;
Death rides in her sail! the triumphant guest;—
My soul as she enters in haven will rest;
The "sacred theory," friends, let us salute!
Nor waste our last moments in eloquence mute;—
Let's not throw to the winds the remains of the feast!
But the gods' supreme gifts to the last joyful taste.
The happy vessel, her voyage near o'er,
Suspends not her course when nearest the shore;
But, with flowers crown'd, to the winds spreads her sails,
As she enters the port with songs of joy hails!

" Poets say that the swan, before her last hour,
Sweet strains of plaintiveness, weeping, will pour,
Believe it not, friends! the melodious bird
With a more sublime instinct the gods have
preferred!
Of smiling Eurotas near quitting the spring,—
From the beautiful body! the soul half on wing,—
Advancing step by step, towards a world sublime!
Gets a peep of the pure immortal clime!
And in the sweet ecstacy drowned at this view,—
In dying, she warbles melodious adieu!
Ye, who near the grave come round me to cling,
I, too, am a swan,—I die!—I can sing!

Beneath the dome, at these words, sad sobs burst,
The circle press round him more close than at first,

" O thou beloved friend! who too soon must die!
Speak to us of hope!—of immortality!"
" I will," said he, " from the women apart,
Their half-stifled sighs will melt every heart.
We must disdain the terrors of the grave,
And enter a new world with a step, brave.
Ye know it, my friends! from earliest youth,
A genius unknown! inspired me with truth;—
Was it some god, that in a voice concealed?
The laws of the future world kindly revealed?
A shade that embraced me with friendship secret!
The echo of the future? the muse of the poet!
I know not: but the spirit that whispered my soul,
Since my end I approach, as the swift moments roll,
In sounds more exalted consoles by its voice,
Its whispers divine seem more to rejoice;
It may be the heart, from tumultuous sense free,—
In more silence hears the sweet harmony;—

Or th' invisible genius resembles the bird
Whose notes at still eve most melodious are heard;—
Or my soul forgetting this day will soon end,—
Suspended from earth, to future doth tend—
Distinguishes better sounds from above,—
Like the wandering nautilus that doth the wave
rove,
As onward it sails approaching the shore,—
Distinguishes sounds more clear than before!—
This invisible friend more close hovers round,
With its rapturous accent my ear doth resound,—
And this divine voice in mine speaks to day :—
Listen, then, friends!—to the voice I obey!

His face calm and serene! hope in his eye shone,
Socrates made a sign to his friends to sit down.—
The mute sign is obey'd in silence profound,—
On the edge of the bed they are soon seated round.—

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His mantle Symias drew o'er his eyes;
Crito with pensive eye question'd the skies;—
Cebes inclines his face melancholy!
Anaxagoras, arm'd with a smile not unholy,—
Seem'd to envy the philosopher's fate,
Who at fortune could smile—at death seem elate.
The servant of th' eleven lean'd 'gainst the door,
Arms folded in silence, the scene to deplore.
"What to him are his virtues:" he murmuring cried,
Whilst by turns doubt and pity across his soul glide.
Sad Phedon with his hair his fine face veils,—
Shed his tears for the sage, but the friend more bewails!
Nearer his master's feet on the funeral couch!
Like a fond son reclining doth every turn watch!
Raises his veil'd eyes o'er the friend all adore!
Blushes to weep him,—yet weeps him the more!

Of the sage, however, terrestrial woe
Dar'd not alter his features with colour that glow :
His look above us seem'd to read a while,
His mouth, where reposed his gracious smile,
Already half open, seem'd ready to speak,
Yet his ear sought his friend ere he silence did break.
His fine hair, by the breath of autumn blown,
Designed on his head a pale lovely brown,
And the pure air of morn, agitated in pace,
Cast silv'ry reflections over his face.
But through that divine face his soul we could see
Where his thoughts sublime shone in sweet dignity!
As through alabaster or transparent brass—
From the lamp; on the altar dying fires pass,—
By its brilliance veiled itself still betraying
With luminous reflected colours arraying !—
As the eye on the sea the sail pursues,
Upon his solemn face attaching their views,

From his eyes suspended, that scarcely respire
His friends rapt in silence their own breath retire.
Their eyes contemplated him the last time—
They were no more to hear that voice sublime!
As the wave the wand'ring breath of Eolus opes,
Impatient to hear him, they gaze, their hopes!
At length, from heaven, on them his look he cast,
Then begun with a smile, as in times that were past.—

Why weep ye, my friends! Why weep, when my soul
Like incense pure in the chaste vestal's bowl!
For ever free from the vile body's weight
Will fly to the gods, transported by fate!
Saluting pure day, which now she half sees,
Seeking truth, knowing, seeing her, as she is!

Why do we live, if not in hope to die?
Why for justice do I suffer patiently?
Why in this world of death, falsely call'd life,
With vile passions struggling have I held strife?
My soul of my sense combatting the shame
Without death, my friends, 'what were virtue's'
flame?
The prize of the combat, the celestial crown,
The holy judge gives, at immortal throne!
The voice of Jupiter! calls us away;—
Friends, let us bless it! I hear it to-day:
I might by disputing my life's remains,—
The order celestial hear twice for my pains,—
The gods preserve me from prolonging its course,
Their attentive slave—I yield to their force!
And ye, if ye love me, as at fine feasts spread,
Friends! let the perfume flow over your head!
An offering make to the prison walls round!
With verdant festoons let your foreheads be crown'd

Like a young bridegroom by th' eager crowd
prest,—
Throwing chaste flowers o'er the sill of the guest!
From the bath to the nuptial bed led by the band,—
To the arms of death lead me by the hand!

"What is it to die? to break the dread chain,
That in Hymen doth soul and body retain,—
From a vile weight, at the tomb be discharged!
To die is not death! 'tis the soul enlarged!
Whilst he lives, o'erwhelmed by the body's tie,
Man t'wards the real good feebly draws nigh,—
And by the sad cares which arrest in his course,—
Loses, or follows truth with trembling force;—
But he who draws near the term he implores—
See's Auroras bright morn shine on happier shores,—

Like a ray of eve remounting the skies
Exiled from earth to the blest gods he flies,
There, quaffing large draughts of nectar divine,
The day of his death man beginneth to shine!

But to die is to suffer! and to suffer is an ill!
Friends! how know we that? Come, the fatal mo-
ment will,
If consecrate by blood, like a great sacrifice,
This body immolated could scarcely suffice;—
Is it not from evil that good comes to light?
Summer comes from winter, day follows night—
God himself hath linked this eternal chain!
We were brought into life in sorrow and pain,—
And this happy death, from which the feeble fly,—
Is only the birth to immortality!

However of death, who can fathom the clime?
The gods lay their finger on his lips sublime:
Who knows if in his hands ready to seize!
The uncertain soul falls, with pain, or with ease!
For myself who still live, I know not, but think—
This silence conceals some mysterious link!
That the indulgent gods! in goodness severe,—
Have, even till death, hid voluptuousness dear;
As in wounding our hearts, with his divine arms!
Love under a tear hides a pleasure that charms."
Th' incredulous Cebes at this discourse smiled,
"I shall soon know the truth," said Socrates mild.

" The first salutation of man to the light,
When his eye-lid is kissed by the sun-beam bright;

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The accent we love, blended with the lyre,
Light perfume exhal'd from the cup to inspire;
The rapture of the lover stealing a kiss,
From the lip to him dear, whose savour is bliss;
Are less rapturous far than the virtuous man's joy,
Made free by death for delights that ne'er cloy:
And whilst they collect his ashes below,
Elate in his course he flieth from woe;
Forgets, e'en adieu! to the world he late trod,—
Like a shadow it vanishes, sinks before God!—
But is it sufficient to die!—to revive?—
No,—the soul with the sense must combat and strive
Over mortal passions a triumph gain,
Life one long death here must wear virtue's chain!—
Life is the combat,—death the victory,
Earth to us the altar expiatory!
Where man on the sill, of sense despoiled,
Ought to cast in the fire his garment soiled;

Or, ere on altar of propitiation
He offer to the gods his expiation.—

" They go with one step from the tomb to the skies,
Where death is no more—but gods, and the wise—
Heroes! and conquerors of sense! to join;
Who vanquished their senses, by reason divine;—
Who material passions, by the mind broke,—
Bow'd to rites and laws, walked under their yoke;
Of the internal judge questioning the voice,
Apart from the crowd, made the right path their choice.—
Pray'd—served the gods, from whom virtue flows,
Suffered for justice, for truth's lovely glows;—
Still keeping in view their future felicity,
Of the children of heaven acquired the liberty!—

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But those who cherish sense as much as soul,
Of spirit, and body, the plot tighter roll;—
Like Leda delivered to transports of shame,
They prostitute the soul to grovelling flame;
If some god in mercy do not them deliver!
They live after death in torment for ever:
From the guilty ties by themselves drawn close,
Their imperfect manes know no repose!
Like the spider to cobweb threads suspended,
Their bodies and souls confounded and blended;
The decaying link they vainly would break,
The love of the senses they cannot forsake;
With their withered arms the soul they pursue,
Recalling the Hymen she hates to her view.
Like a heavy air that on marshes sleeps,
Their vile weight from the gods for ever keeps!
These wand'ring manes in darkness groan,
With the bird of night of funereal moan,

Around cold monuments, urns, and the tomb,
Life's frightful remains they drag at night's gloom,
Ashamed to live still, and flying the light;
When the eye-lid of innocence rests in night,
From their caves obscure they noiseless glide,
Enveloped by night as sad criminals hide!
Imitating on the waves Aurora's rise,
When the meteor pale to the mountain flies,
With frightful dreams besieging our minds,
In the midst of woods sacred! their cries raise the
winds;
Or, sorrowful, seated near the edge of a tomb,
In their bloody fingers their faces inhume;
Jealous of their victim their forfeits weep o'er,
But the souls of the good return no more!"

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He ceased, and Cebes the sad silence did rend,
" The gods forbid, that I Hope should offend
That divinity who resembles love,
With her eyes concealed leads to light above:
But since from our shore, like her, thou fly'st;
Alas! thy supreme words, before thou dyest:
To instruct me, O, my master! not t' afflict thee,
T' answer, and interrogate, wilt thou permit me?"
Socrates mildly inclined his visage.—
When Cebes, as follows, questioned the sage.—

" The soul, thou sayest, beyond the tomb lives!
But if to us like the light a torch gives
When the flame to the sense has the matter consumed;—
When the torch is extinct can the light be relumed?

All at once are destroyed, the torch and the light!
At once both return into the same night!—
If the soul to the sense be like sound from the lyre,
The harmonious concord we draw from the wire;
When the wood is destroyed by worms or time;
When the broken chords no longer will chime,
When crushed by the feet of a young bacchanal;
The expiring lyre, broken nerves, strings all!
What becomes of the noise that divinely did roll?
Dieth it with the lyre,—with the body, the soul?"—

At these words the sages, the mystery to sound,
Looked with pensive faces in thought profound!
Seeking an answer, yet imagined none!
To each other murmured, in a low tone,
"When the lyre is no more, where's the harmony?"
And Socrates' bright genius was over him ready!—

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On one hand supporting, passive, his chin,
The other o'er Phedon's forehead roving;
On his neck of ivory carelessly straying
His white hair caressing in thoughtless playing;
Then untying one of its branches long,
Which down to the ground in ringlets hung,
Made on his knees float their soft waves so bright,
Or rolled musing; his fingers in the tresses white;
Then playfully spoke like an old man divine,
Who mingles wisdom with cups of rich wine!—

"Friends! the soul is not that uncertain light,
The flame of the senses on earth making bright,
She's the eye immortal that sees weak day
Its alternate rise meridian, last ray
Whose flame undiminished above itself rises
Whilst the mere torch of life it eclipses, despises,

Like the mortal eye, which in obscurity
Preserves its sight, though it lose light's purity!

The soul to the sense is not like to the lyre;
Th' harmonious sounds we draw from the wire;
She's the conscious self, the finger divine,
That hears her own moaning, or melody fine:
The invisible genius; the auditor attentive
That harmony regulates, judgment can give;
Who with the discourse ev'ry sense affords,
Forms ravishing concerts at pleasure of the gods;
In vain the lyre dies, and the sound evaporates,—
O'er its mute spoils the ear still contemplates:—
Art thou content, Cebes? yes, I believe thy adieu;—
Socrates is immortal!—his God alone true!"

Already the sun was on the mountains,
With the same ray gilding both waves and fountains,

As if bidding the world a magnificent adieu!
In the bosom of God! to rise anew:
On the sides of Hymetus the shadow slept;
The flocks from the heights of Taygetus crept;
Lovely Cynthia swam in a sea of bright gold!
The morning fisher wandered on the wave bold,—
Slackening near shore, his course suspended,—
Singing and lowering his sail distended.—
The flute in the woods, and the songs on the seas,
Reached our ears on the sighs of the waving breeze;
To mingle their sweets with our funeral sighs,
Like a fine ray of eve that melts in dark skies!

The hour for the bath, my friends, draweth nigh,
Slaves! the brass vase with water well supply!

I would offer to the gods a victim pure!
Then plunged in the urn his wish to secure,
As the priest who the sacrifice offers up,
Of the liberating wave he took hold of the cup;
Three times o'er his face the crystal wave ran,
Three over the breast of the god-like man;
Then with a purple veil the liquid stream dried,
Perfumed his hair, and, as follows, cried:—
"The God we forget to adore his traces!
Preserve me Apollo! from blaspheming the graces!"
Hebé life filling to celestial remains,—
The quiver of Love! Iris bow on the plains!
Nor the cestus of Venus so smiling sweet!
Which with sympathy's chain doth nature greet,
Nor eternal Saturn, nor great Jupiter;
Nor all those gods of heaven, earth, or air!
Those beings that people Elysium Olympus,
Are the image of God adored by us!—

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The letters of his name upon nature glow,
The shadow God throws o'er his creatures below!
My reason adores these titles divine,
As the sun we salute at Aurora's first shine;
It may perhaps be that those gods invented
That heaven that hell by the lyre chanted,
Are not flights of genius fancy to please
But of infinite ladder brilliant degrees;
Which by beings shed in the universe vast,
Separates, re-unites the divers stars cast:
It may be in short in the vast extent,
In all that e'er moves a soul may be pent,
That those brilliant stars, over head that shine
Are burning suns or fires, living divine;
That the ocean striking the frightened coast
In its bellowing waves rolls an angry soul lost,
That our air embalmed, flying in a sky pure,
Is a spirit floating on wings of azure.

That the day is an eye that sheddeth light,
Whose eyelid is veiled by the beauty of night;
In short, in heaven, earth, every place that's trod,
All live,—are intelligent,—in all is God.

"Believe, friends, my voice that will soon be extinguished,
Above all those gods by our eye distinguished;
There is through all nature, there is beneath heaven,
Something obscure and mysterious given;
Which both necessity and reason proclaim,
Perceiv'd by faith only, the soul's eye of flame!
Cotemporary with days, and with eternity!
Grand as infinity, alone as the unity!
Impossible to name! to our senses impalpable!
Whose first attribute is to be inconceivable!

In place, or in time, now, to-morrow, yesterday,
Ascend, or descend, we arrive at this ray!
All that we behold is his omnipotence!
All of virtue we think his sublime essence!
Creator of all good, truth, strength, love,
Is the God of all gods! mine! all above!...."

But evil, said Cebes, who created it? crime
Is the just chastisement of this guilty clime;
Evil and death became the rent earth's lot,
Both the same day were born: God knew them not!
Whether a fatal attraction, a guilty flame,
Towards the soul first attracted material shame;—
Or rather that life in too powerful ties
Enthralleth the spirit, with the senses cries,—

With adulterous love the two penetrating,
'Tis a mystery great hath the concentrating!
This horrible union is evil; which death,
With violence chastiseth by taking life's breath!
When the Hymen expires at the moment supreme,
On its elements vile the soul looks as a dream,
And flies to immortal regions of light,
To a world of happiness, of truth bright!

Dost thou know the road to this world invisible?
Said Cebes; to thine eye is it accessible?
—My friends, I approach it, to discern it nigh; ....
What needs there? said Phedon—be pure and die!
Inaccessible to man in a point of space,
It may be in heaven! in air, or in place;—

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There is another world, an elysium, a heaven,
Where large streams of honey are not indeed given;
Where the souls of the good for God alone thirst,
And with nectar eternal in joy are immersed;—
Where holy manes immortal spirit,
Of their sacrificed bodies the prize inherit!
Neither Tempé dark, nor Menalus smiling
With perfumes the breath of morn beguiling;
Nor the valleys of Hemus, nor those rich hills
Which enchant Eurotas with murmuring rills,
Nor that land, in short, to poets so dear,
In which travellers linger, or leave with a tear;
Do not approach to that pure blest abode
Where souls receive day in the look of their God!
Where never in night divine day expires!
But the sweet air of love for ever respires;
Where immortal bodies, or always reviving,
New senses inspire for delights still surviving!

What bodies in heaven? life clogged with death!
Yes, bodies resplendent with glorious breath!
The soul to compose its garments divine,
Culls the flowers of the universe that most bright
shine;
The soft transparent rays of the sweet light,
All that life and matter have most pure to sight;
The perfumes that evening steals from the flow'rs,
The shadowy reflections of those tinted hours,
The harmonious noise, am'rous zephyr sighs,
Drawn from night's bosom from the wave that
replies,
The flame which exhales 'midst gold and azure,
The crystal streams rolling, in a sky pure,
The purple that tinges Aurora's veil,
The sleeping rays the trembling stars conceal,

United in harmony's loveliest glows
Blend under his fingers, his body compose!
And the soul that before was a slave on the earth,
Holding war with the senses revolted from birth,
Over impotent vows now triumphs with joy,
With majesty reigns without impure alloy;
For pleasures infinite, that still multiply
In space and in time enjoys life that cannot die!—

" Sometimes to take flight where called by desire,
She loves to perfume the wings of a zephyr,
Then colours t! em over with Iris' bright ray,
From heav'n to hell, sun-set till Aurora gay;
Like a wand'ring bee she runs to each place,
Discovering and kissing God's work in all space!

Sometimes to the brilliant car Aurora lends,
Adds a courser that animates tempest; or rends.
In those beautiful deserts where wand'ring fires glow,
Seeks those kindred spirits she loved below;
From system to system, sun to sun roves,
Flying and blending with the soul she loves,
Of infinite space the vast turns winds,
And in God's bosom herself ever finds!

" The soul to support her nature celestial,
Borrows not her chaste food from the body terrestrial,
Not the nectar from Hebé's cup that flows,
Nor the perfume of flowers all sweet as the rose,
Nor the libation in her honour drinking,
Can nourish the soul—she lives by thinking.
With satisfied desires, love, sentiment,
For her being immortal, immortal aliment!

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Thanks to those divine fruits which heaven
multiplies,
She supports and eternizes life in the skies,
Perhaps from the virtue of eternal love,
Multiplies her being and creates up above!

"As well as the body, thought Contemplation,
Are fertile! one single desire can make a creation
The same as a sound which echo repeats,
And immensity multiplies as it retreats;
Or, as in extension the ephemera shine
Immortal flame kindling on altar divine.
So those pure beings attracted by fate,
Whom love of the Creator doth ever penetrate
Throughout infinity seek and confound,
By eternal decree their fertility's found,
Of starry deserts, peopling the regions,
Prolonging in heaven their generations!

O celestial loves! holy transport! chaste flame
Kisses! where soul blends with soul! ever the same,
Where eternal desire and beauty chaste
Unite in voluptuous joys, their souls taste!
If I dared!"—but a noise echoed under the dome!
The sage listened tranquil, to hear what might
come,
And we turned our eyes, alas! to the west,
And the bright day was flying to sink into rest!

.....

.....

With averted eyes the servant of th' eleven
Presents the poison in bronze cup given.
Socrates with serene brow received the command,
And, like a sacred gift, raised it up in his hand;
The phrase just commenced, was not suspended,
Before he drank it, his thought he ended!

—On large bordered sides of the vase to cut breath,
That ne'er from its bosom filled aught but death,
Th' artist had melted, 'neath a flaming scroll
Th' hist'ry of Psyche, the symbol of the soul—
And a sweeter symbol of immortality,
A light butterfly sculptured in ivory,
Its eager trunk to the mortal waves clings,
Whilst the handle was formed by its outspread
wings;
Psyché by her parents devoted to love
Quitting ere Aurora the superb grove,
Whom a funeral pomp is about to entwine,
Seems tempting, like death, this Hymen divine;
Then, alone, seated, in tears, her face on her knees,
In a desert wild listens for her spouse mid the breeze;
Melted by her sad woes the light zephyr
Whose divine desire the heavens inspire;
Drying with a sigh the tear from her eyes,
Sleeping on her bosom bears up to the skies!

Her fine face is seen on her shoulder reclined,
Her long hair Æolus kisses sweet on the wind,
Zephyrus' fond arms form a cradle of love,
With his beautiful burden scarce able to move
His burning breath her long eye lashes blows
And, jealous of Love, to her spouse gives with woes!

Here tender Love upon sweet roses laid,
In his arms presses Psyche the trembling maid,
Who a secret fear unable to repress,
Receives his kisses, but dares not caress,
For the spouse celestial his love deceives,
And the sacred roses with the day leaves.

Farther on, half despoiled of nocturnal veil,
In secret, awake, she is seen to steal,

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With a poignard armed, a lamp in one hand,
Psyche, alas! risking Love 'gainst a look doth
stand
Trembling lest her spouse who slept should hear;
She leans t'wards the couch on the tip-toe of fear;
Recognising Love gives a sudden scream,
And the trembling lamp scarce keeps its blue flame.

But of the burning oil a drop was shed,
From the lamp inclined by sad chance it sped,
Fell on the sleeping lover's naked breast,
Impatient Love, half awake, raised his crest;
By turns the poignard, the spilt drop look'd on, ...
Then indignantly fled t'wards celestial zone!
A threatening emblem of indiscreet desire,
Which profanes the gods if too near we aspire!

The left virgin wand'ring the earth around,
Wept her young lover more than her own wound;
But Love at length by her sad tears was moved,
And pardoned the fault of Psyche beloved.—
Then her spouse celestial to Olympus hastes,
From the lips of the god life's stream she tastes;
T'wards heaven advances with timidity;
And Venus is seen to smile at her beauty!
Thus by virtue the soul is rendered divine,
And bright as the gods in Elysium to shine!—

Socrates raising the cup in his hands,
"Let's offer! to our masters and honor their commands,
"Of immortality the happy premise!"
Then inclines towards earth the cup of prize;

Desirous the precious nectar to spare,
Two drops alone sheds to the gods; with care,—
Then to his eager lip approaching the bev'rage,
Emptied it slowly without change of visage;
Like a guest as he leaves a banquet fine,
In his golden cup pours the perfumed wine;
And, better t' enjoy the last juice with zest,
Sips drop by drop to be still longer blest!
Then on his bed of death, gently extended,
He quickly resumed his discourse suspended.

"Let us hope in the gods! from whom the soul
came!
Of the love in our hearts, cherish the flame!
Love is the link between blest gods and man,
Both low fear, and grief, their altars profane!

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When the happy signal for deliverance they bring,
Friends! let's take flight t'wards them on Hope's
light wing!
No funeral adieu! No cries! No tears!
The victim below a crown of flow'rs wears;
With joy and love let our souls then be crown'd,
Advancing to meet them as to Hymen bound!—
These are the festoons, the perfumes precious,
The voices, instruments, the songs melodious,
Which the soul convoked to the banquet supreme,
Should adorn itself with ere it quitteth this frame!

"Raise then your faces so pale with affright!
Ask me no more about burial's rite;
On this that was me what oil ye must shed?
In what place, in what urn, rest my ashes, my
head?

What to you, or to me, if this garment vile,
Be eaten by worms, or burnt on the pile?
Whether a cold dust, that did me once unite,
Be swept to the waves, or to Gemini bright;
This vile body which divers elements compose
Will be no more of me than the wave that flows —
Than a leaf in the woods which the young eagle
treads;
Than petrified clay that forms human heads;
Than the fire of the pile which the winds exhale,
Or the sands in the road moved on by the gale!

But I leave, on quitting this ungrateful earth,
A more noble spoil of Socrates worth!
T' ye all my virtues! to Plato my genius!
My soul to the just gods! my life to Melitus!
As to hungry dogs that bark for their prey,
On quitting the feast we throw relics away!" ....

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Like a murmuring sigh of the oar and the wave,
Blends with the sea-song of the sailor brave:
During this discourse a funereal plaint
Accompanied the voice of one ready to faint:
Alas! it was Myrto, demanding her spouse,
Whom the hour of adieu brought with her last vows!
Bewildered, disturbed, were her uncertain feet,
Clinging to her robe in innocence sweet;
Two lovely children trembling by her side!
Their naked feet tottered near their sole guide;
Her tears she dried with her long fair tresses,
But her charms were blighted by their traces;—
Death o'er her fine features its paleness spread;
One might have said grief, whose sharp arrows had sped.

The great soul of Socrates, not attaining,
The man had respected; the woman profaning!
Both terror and love at the sight of him blend,
With tender respect she wept o'er her friend;
Like Cytherea, wept at the banquet of woe,
O'er the bacchanal Adonis, whose tears sadly flow,
Partaking with Venus divine griefs and fears,
The marble she tenderly warms with her tears:
Silent o'er him she breathes, yet dares not do more,
And the fine god she weeps seems quite to adore.

Socrates receiving his children in his arms
With wet cheek inclined, spoke to soothe their alarms:
We saw a fond tear, and it was the last,
Under his fall'n eye-lash, roll'd in his eye-lid fast.

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With a weak arm, offering to the gods he cries,
"I was their father here! ye are in the skies!
"I die! but ye live! their infancy guard;
"I bequeath them, good gods! to your love and
regard!..."

In his purple veins fast the poison ran,
Enchaining the life-blood of the god-like man;
Like an ebbing wave one might see t'wards his heart,
Life and heat mount up, on the brink to depart;
His perishing limbs potent death does assail,
Like the marble of Paros, as cold and as pale;—
In vain mourning Phedon embraced his dead feet,
And under his burning breath would have given
heat;
His face, hands, and feet to the touch were as ice,
There remained for us only his soul and his voice!

Like the block divine whence Galatea burst,
When a soul immortal from Olympus first
Descended in the marble, at the voice of love
Made his heart palpitate, and with sentiment move;
Which opening its eyelid to bursting light
Is no longer marble, nor woman quite!

.....

Was its death's sublime, yet pale majesty?
Or the first rays of immortality?
But his sacred forehead, with beauty's light,
Shone like Aurora on Didymus' height;
And our eyes, which sought to seize his adieu,
Turn'd with awe away, as tho' a god met our view!—
Sometimes with his eye rais'd to heav'n he silent mused,
Then the streams of holy eloquence used;

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Like one with the grape's luscious juice elate,
The thread of his discourse, still broke to repeat;—
Or like Orpheus wand'ring in obscure glades,
In words half-broken he spoke to the shades!
"Cypresses of Academus! bend ye," said he,
"Bend ye! and weep! him no more will ye see!
Let the waves in dashing the marble of Pyreus
Cast with their foam a voice weeping piteous:—
The gods have recalled him! do ye not know?...
But his mourning friends, whither will they go?
There's Plato! Cebés! his children, and his wife!
There's his dear Phedon, the beloved of his life!
They go with a pensive step by Phebé's light,
To weep o'er a coffin concealed from sight,
Reclined o'er my urn they seem tho' awake!
From my ashes awaiting to hear my voice speak?—
Yes! I will speak to ye friends as before,
When reclined on my bed my voice ye breath'd o'er!

But that time is long past! what a short absence
Between them and me, great gods! has thrown a distance?
Ye who seek so far my steps fond to trace,
Raise your eyes! see!....to hear me they cease!
Why this mourning? why with tears inundate?
Spare thy long fair tresses Myrto, rise above fate!*
Turn to me thine eyes, let not thy tears flow,
Myrto! Plato! Cebes! friends! could ye but know!..."

"Oracles be silent! voice of the porch fall!
Fly vain lights of ancient wisdom all!
Clouds covered over with a false light!
Vanish, disperse, before truth splendid bright!
With an hymen ineffable ready to burst;
Wait...one, two, three...yes wait four ages first—

* Socrates had two wives, Xantippe and Myrto.

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And its glorious rays from the deserts will shine,
The universe filling with splendor divine!
Ye shadows of God, that from us veil his face!
Phantoms, impostors, adored in his place!
Gods of flesh and blood! gods living! mortal gods!
Vices deified on worldly altars trod!
Mercury with wings of gold; goddess of Cythery,
Who adore with impunity robbery and adultery;—
All ye great and small race of Jupiter
Who people—who soil, waters, earth, and air!
Yet a little while and your crowd august,—
Rolling in error from Olympus will be dust;—
Will give place to that holy God, universal alone!
The God I adore, whose altar is his throne!...

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What secrets unveiled! What vast harmony!

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But yet who art thou? mysterious genii,
Thou who ever veiling thy face from mine eyes,
Hast led me by thy voice to the gates of the skies!
Who like a fond faithful bird divinely didst sing,
Caress still my face with sweet air from thy wing,
Art thou some Apollo in shape of a dove?
Some beautiful Mercury sent by Love?
Hold'st thou the happy wand? the bow or lyre?
Or art thou a holy thought sent to inspire?
If spirit, mortal, or God! oh, come to my view;
Or, ere thou receivest my lasting adieu,
Let me discover thou being of pure worth,
The friend who has lov'd me, e'en before birth!
Let me, on approaching the end of this land,
Return thanks to my guide and weep o'er his hand!

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Burst from the brilliant veil that hides thee I
implore!
Approach!—....what do I see? O! Word that
I adore!
Ray co-eternal! is it you that I see?—
Veil yourself, or twice I die for thee!

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Happy they who born in that holy land
Where Eretria's waves with respect kiss the strand!
They will first see on their pure horizon
Arise in the morn the blest star of reason.
Friends, towards the east turn your longing eyes;
Truth will come to us whence we see the sun rise!
But who shall bring it?—Thou, O! Word conceived!
Thou who thro' time mine eyes have long perceived!

Thou by whom the future with splendour is bright,
Enlighten me before-hand to life's supreme height,
Thou comest! livest! diest! by merited death!
For death is the price of truth's pure breath!....
But thy expiring voice which this world shall hear
Like mine shall not be lost—but spread far and near.
The voice that comes from heaven shall not there
return;
The slumbering universe shall wake up and learn,
The enigma of destiny on earth be revealed!
.....
The mystery sublime, that I still saw concealed!
Number mysterious! profound trinity!
Triumvirate composed of triple unity!
The forms, colours, sounds, the numbers a problem,
All concealed from me my God! all were his emblem!
But those veils to mine eyes at length are o'er,
"Listen!"....he spoke, we heard him no more!

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Yet still in his bosom his last breath opprest,
Was so low that his thoughts could not be exprest,
From his lips, half open, life seemed to fly,
Then the breath palpitated suddenly,
As ready to flutter to paternal springs,
One sees the swan seated, fluttering its wings.
In the arms of a dream, he seem'd to repose,
Whilst Cebes with courage approached him more close;
Recalling in his eyes, the soul evaporating,
Unto his last moments interrogating;
"Sleepest thou?" said he, "is death a dream?"
Collecting his strength, "No, a bright sun-beam."—
—Is thine eye veiled by shadows funereal?—
—No, I see pure day peep through darkness real.—

—Dost thou not hear doleful cries, sad groans?—No.
I hear stars of gold, praise a name as they go.—
—What dost thou feel? — like a young chrosylis
casting the skin,
To moulder in earth, in which life did begin,
To the rays of Aurora opening his eyes,
When the breath of the morn rolls into the skies!—
—Dost thou not deceive us? the soul was she?
—Believe in this smile her immortality!—
—This imperfect world, how expectest thou to quit?
—I wait for a breath like a sail spread, for flight:
—Whence will it come? — from heaven! — one
word more!
—No; leave my soul in peace that to God she
may soar.

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He spoke; and closed his eyes for the last time,
And silent for ever seemed that voice sublime;

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A false ray of life at intervals beam'd
With death's livid purple his pale face gleam'd
As in a pure ev'ning in autumnal season,
When the brilliant sun hath left th' horizon,
A forgotten ray from the shadows steals,
And colours the gold sides of a cloud as it sails.
At length more freely he seem'd to respire,
The sweet smile on his features we still could admire,
To the liberal gods, let them sacrifice in strife!
They have cured me!—Of what?—said Cebes.
Of life!....
Then a gentle sigh from his cold lips burst,
As sweet as the bees' flight in Hybla nurst!
Was it?...I know not; but full of holy love
We felt within us a second soul move!....

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Like a lily on the waters whose stalk inclines,
His head fall'n gently on his breast reclines,
His long eye-lashes which death had half closed,
On his sleeping eye falling quiet repos'd,
Seem'd just as in life, when their shadow sought
Silence to gather, or to veil his thought!
His last endeavour to speak appear'd chain'd—
On his half-open lips his word, alas! remained,—

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And his features where life its empire had lost,
Of a smile eternal in death yet could boast! . . .
Its habitual motion governed his hand,
His finger still pointing to immortal land!
And when the sweet look of Aurora rose
By degrees dispersing, the shadows glows
Like a lighted beacon on mountain lorn,
To gild his dead face with the tints of morn,
One might have said Venus in mourning divine
Came to weep her dead lover at earthly shrine!
Or that sorrowful Phœbe with her pale ray,
The breast of Endymion! carest in her way,
Or from heaven's height the happy sage,
Returned to contemplate the soul's late cage.
Revisiting from far the body neglected,
The soul's splendid beauty upon it reflected!

Like a star that's cradled in sky divine,

Loves to see its chaste image in the waves shine!

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There was heard around neither plaint nor sigh!

It was thus that he died!....if this be to die.

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NOTES.

FIRST NOTE.

"On the sea was seen sailing a gilded prow."

ECHECRATE.

Phedon, was you yourself with Socrates the day that he drank the hemlock in the prison, or have you only heard it spoken of?

PHEDON.

I was there myself, Echecrate.

ECHECRATE.

What did he say in his last moments, and in what manner did he die? I would willingly hear it, for we have nobody at Phliunte who makes the voyage to Athens, and no Athenian has visited us for a long time who was capable of giving us any information on the subject — that he died after drinking the hemlock — was all they could tell.

PHEDON.

You have heard nothing then of the process, nor how things passed?

ECHECRATE.

That it was over, somebody related to us; and we were astonished that the sentence was not executed for a long time after it had been given; what was the cause, Phedon?

PHEDON.

A particular circumstance — it was found that on the eve of judgment they had crowned the prow of the vessel which the Athenians send every year to Delos.

ECHECRATE.

What vessel is it then?

PHEDON.

The Athenians say it is the same vessel in which Theseus formerly conducted the seven youths and seven young girls to Crete, whom he saved when he made his escape. It is related that at their departure the Athenians made a vow to Apollo, if Theseus and his companions escaped death, to send every year to Delos a Theory; and they have never failed to accomplish their vow. When the epoch for the Theory arrives, a law orders that the town shall be pure, and forbids any sentence of death from being executed before the vessel shall have reached Delos and returned to Athens — and sometimes when the

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winds are contrary the voyage lasts a long time. The Theory begins as soon as the priest of Apollo has crowned the prow, which took place on the eve of the judgment on Socrates. This is the reason that so long an interval elapsed between his condemnation and death.

SECOND NOTE.

" Their watch, 'neath the porch his mourning friends take."

ECHECRATE.

Who were those that wandered there, Phedon?

PHEDON.

Of his countrymen, Apollodorus, Critobulus and his father Crito, Hermogenes, Epigenes, Eschines, and Antisthenes. There were also Ctesippus of the town of *Peaneus*, Menexenes, and some others from the country. Plato, I believe, was ill.

ECHECRATE.

Were there any strangers?

PHEDON.

Yes; Symias of Thebes, Cebes and Phedon, and of Megara, Euclid and Terpsion.

ECHECRATE.

Aristippus and Cleombrutus, were not they there?

PHEDON.

No; it was reported they were at Egina.

ECHECRATE.

Were not others there?

PHEDON.

Those I believe were nearly all.

ECHECRATE.

Well, upon what did you say the conversation turned?

THIRD NOTE.

"It is the sacred vessel! the happy Theory!"

SOCRATES.

What news? is the vessel arrived from Delos, at whose return I am to die?

CRITO.

Not yet; but it seems that it ought to arrive to day by what the people say who come from Sunium * where they left it; therefore, it cannot fail to be here to-day; and to-morrow morning, Socrates, thou must quit life.

SOCRATES.

Willingly, Crito; if it be the will of the gods, let it be accomplished: but I do not think it will arrive to-day.

CRITO.

Why not?

FOURTH NOTE.

" ———— let this day supreme,
In our sweet conversations flow just the same."

The accusation commenced against Socrates, such as it still existed in the second age of the Christian era at Athens in the temple of Cybele as related by Phavorinus, mentioned by Diogenes Laertes, rested

* A promontory of Attica, opposite the Cyclades.

upon two grounds : first, that Socrates did not believe in the religion of the state; secondly, that he corrupted youth,—that is, evidently, that he instructed youth not to believe in the religion of the state.

The defence of Socrates does not answer in a satisfactory manner to either of these two principal accusations; instead of declaring that he believed in the established religion, Socrates proves that he is not an Atheist; instead of shewing that he did not instruct youth to doubt the dogmas consecrated by the laws, he protests that he always taught them pure morality. As an advocate, as a regular defence, it cannot be denied, that the apology of Socrates is very weak.

This it could not fail to be, because the accusation was founded, and that, in fact, in an order of things the basis of which is a religion of state, one cannot think, like Socrates, of that religion, and publish one's thoughts, without hurting the religion, consequently without disturbing the state, and provoking, at length, a revolution; and the proof is, that two ages later, when that revolution burst out, its most zealous partizans, in their most violent attacks against paganism, did nothing but repeat the arguments of Socrates in the Euthyphron. One may now confess, Socrates does not raise himself so much as a philosopher, only precisely to the condition of being culpable

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of taking this title, and the duties which it imposed on him in the strict sense, and according to the spirit of antiquity. He knew his own situation so well, that at the commencement of the apology he declares he only defends himself to obey the law.